

# Training day

## Environment right for military environmental training

*New warrant officers get practical basics*

By KIM GILLESPIE  
For the Rocket

"What will get you fired!" is why Chief Warrant Officer Max Bennett, operations officer for the Ordnance Munitions and Electronics Maintenance School, Warrant Officer Training Division, schedules a day of environmental training for the Warrant Officer Basic Course. Bennett says this facetiously, but he is also serious about what the training means.

"Issues like the environment and safety are key to their jobs as communications or missile technicians because it's about keeping themselves and their Soldiers from getting hurt. If these warrant officers don't make the right decisions regarding health, safety and the environment, it can be grounds for their removal," he said.

It was Bennett's suggestion that the Garrison's Office of Environment and Safety, and WOTD join forces to educate new warrant officers about the environ-

mental issues and responsibilities they may face in their new positions. The idea was embraced by the Garrison's Directorate of Environment and Safety.

"Environmental work is a priority for the Department of the Army, and what we are seeing right now is a cultural change in how these issues are handled," said Mike Moore, Garrison Safety Office director. "Leadership wants the boots on the ground to have the knowledge and tools to make the decisions and changes that are necessary."

The course emphasizes how the Garrison works with tenant organizations not only as a natural partnership, but one with far-reaching benefits.

"Some processes and ways of doing business may differ from installation to installation, but the requirements and regulations are going to be the same," said Danny Dunn, Natural Resources Division chief. "We can also give them an idea about what offices and personnel would be appropriate points of contact for various types of work."

During the daylong presentation, Garrison personnel presented information



Photo by Kim Gillespie

**TAKING NOTES—** Warrant Officer Michael Gilbert checks his notes during a recent environmental and safety presentation.

ranging from overviews of the garrison's environment and safety programs to specifics such as hazardous materials and hazardous waste, endangered species, wetlands, cultural resource, and laws and regulations such as the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. The presentation was a combination of slides, videos, examples and even a hazard communication pop quiz.

There were specific examples, such as citing the most common locations for environmental violations (motor pools and storage buildings and rooms). The most important emphasized: "Documentation. Document everything," said Craig Northridge, installation compliance chief.

The day of environmental training is ever-evolving, and WOTD can tailor the content to prepare these officers for their upcoming assignments, Bennett said. "We are providing training for ordnance warrant officers, and the Chief of Ordnance has given us guidance for military occupational skills of 910A (ammunition), 918B (communications and electronics maintenance) and 918D (missile maintenance) technicians to ensure the training they are receiving is relevant and up-to-date. The students receive common core training, which includes policies and standards that any Soldier in a supervisory position should have up-to-date information on. Transformations and changes are happening so quickly we need to constantly assess what is taught for each Basic or Advanced Warrant Officers Course."

Bennett for example studied the training that the current Basic students had received at Fort Rucker in the Warrant Officer Candidate School. He also looked at the training topics proposed by the

Directorate of Environment and Safety. "For this class I noticed that the Garrison Environment and Safety Directorate had risk management scheduled. These officers had just had risk management training two weeks ago so I asked that they replace risk management with another relevant environmental class because it would just be repetitious," he said.

The warrant officers indicated that the environmental information was not only interesting but would also prove useful in the future.

"My degree is in environmental science, so I really enjoyed the presentations," Warrant Officer Joey Mitchell said.

Warrant Officer Michael Gilbert said he found the examples cited and the descriptions of responsibilities useful. "My next assignment is Fort Stewart (Ga.), and I know I will probably be addressing some of the same garrison issues discussed today right away or at least at some point in the future," he said.

Dunn concurred with this assessment, noting that planning, projects and exercises can come to a halt because of issues involving endangered species and wetlands.

The warrant officers suggested topics for future environmental training. They saw a need for information or examples regarding hazardous material transportation, deployment checklists, arms inspector checklists, and exercises. The officers also wanted to know more about the specific duties of environmental, safety and hazardous material officers — positions they might be called upon to fill.

"This kind of feedback is terrific because it helps us make each training session more relevant to their jobs and the Army," Dunn said.